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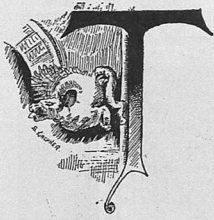
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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT ORNAMENTAL DRAWING.\*



THE course of study I am about to point out is within reach of all; they will find the method easy, and a source of continued enjoyment when fairly mastered. Nature shall be their instructor, for all I can pretend to do is to point out a practical mode of receiving her lessons.

1st. Your first attempt should be of the most simple nature and on a large scale, therefore begin by procuring a black painted board or slate of two or three feet square, and on it practice in white chalk the drawing of squares, circles and ovals without any guide to the hand.

2d. When you are pretty perfect in these, practice in the same way triangles, hexagons, octagons, and other figures arising from the various combinations of straight lines.

3d. Next by your circular and oval lines you may form crescents, circular and flattened volutes, regular undulations, and other figures, first making an accurate copy for yourself of each figure by measurement, and continuing to practice until you can form it by the eye with perfect ease. Avoid forming figures by little bits at a time; do each line as much as possible by one sweep of the hand.

4th. When you find yourself pretty perfect in this kind of practice I would recommend you to draw at once from nature. You may take for your first subject a cabbage leaf, the larger the better, and persevere in copying it full size until you can represent it accurately in outline, with its principal fibres. You may then vary your practice by other simple subjects of a similar kind.

5th. Before endeavoring to draw more than one leaf at a time, you must know a little of perspective.

The most simple mode by which you will attain such knowledge of this art as will be most useful for your present purpose is to hang a circular object, such as a hoop, between yourself and the window. Then moving it gently around and receding a little from it, you will find that as one side of it retires and the other comes forward, the circle becomes narrower and narrower, until it disappears altogether, leaving a dark line before you as if a stick instead of a hoop were there hanging. Do this before the window, because the hoop will there appear as a dark line, and you will thereby be better able to make out the change in the shape of the circle.

Fixing the hoop in various positions, draw from it. Observe that it is a different figure from an oval. A knowledge of this simple fact is all that you will require of perspective in the meantime.

6th. You may now hang up your cabbage leaf, or a leaf of other large vegetable, observing the changes in its figures as it turns before the window.

Make an outline of its shape while half turned from you. Then place it where the light will fall upon it with its face half turned from you; and within your outline draw the principal fibres as you see them.

To do this properly will require a great deal of practice, but it will pave your way to being able to draw the most complete groups of flowers and foliage.

7th. Hang before you a small branch of any tree or plant with two or more leaves the larger the better; endeavor to make their outlines, varying their shape according to their perspective. Be particular to do this correctly to nature. I knew an intelligent tradesman so unaware of the simple fact that a circular object changes in shape to the eye when seen obliquely that he returned his portrait to have all the buttons made quite round; for, although they appeared so at a little distance, he had discovered "by actual measurement" this was not their true shape.

The aspect of things is continually changing—in order to remember them at all we must have a conception of them under one definite aspect—an aspect which is often determined by quite other considerations than those of sight. This conception is apt to become mixed up in our minds with the appearance that an object presents on any given occasion.

For instance, the actual appearance of the top of a square table may be that of an irregular rhomboid whose angles and size vary with every movement of the spectator. Our conception of it is that of a square, although perhaps we have never seen it under this aspect. So strongly does this conception influence our minds that even a trained artist finds considerable difficulty in drawing the top of a table flat enough, unless he is aided by perspective.

The same principle may be observed in the natural tendency of any untrained person to draw the two wheels of a cart the same size, although one may be a great deal nearer to the spectator than the other and will consequently look much larger. The two wheels are known to be the same size by measurement, they are therefore supposed to be the same in appearance, the testimony of the eye being falsified by the conception formed by the mind. A great part of the use of perspective is to correct such erroneous judgments.—*A Primer of Art.*

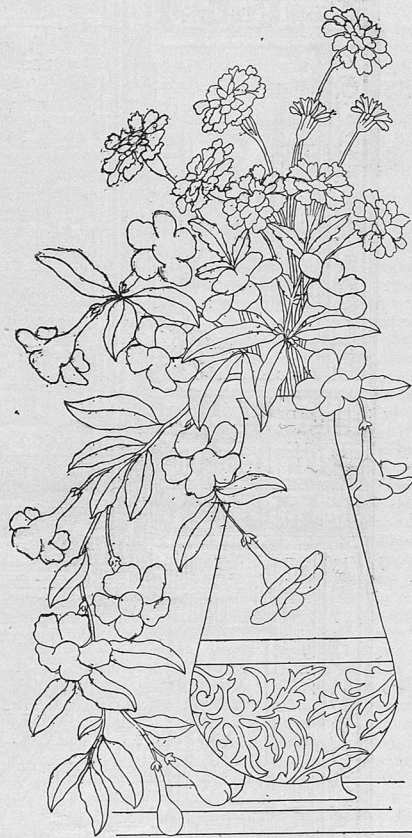
To gain anything like a tolerable accuracy, this first course of lessons may require from six weeks to two months.

Lay aside your chalk and your blackboard, provide yourself with a few sheets of suitable paper and some pieces of common charcoal. Charcoal of lime-tree wood is best. Stretch a white

sheet of paper upon a board by wafers, paste or pins. Place before you a cabbage, cauliflower, dock or other leaf and stalk; they will appear more picturesque if the outer leaves are hanging loose. Copy these carefully in outline, using your charcoal gently, that any inaccuracy may be easily dusted off. A large thistle with its foliage is an excellent but difficult subject—you can hardly go wrong in your choice; hemlock, fir, nettle are all worthy of study. From these the richest and most effective gothic ornaments were taken; and the more you study such subjects, the more beauty and grace will you find in their forms. I need not here remind you that the richest of pure architectural ornaments, the Corinthian capital was suggested by a basket with a weed growing around it. (?)

8th. Your next practice should be light and shade. Powder a bit of your charcoal, dip the point of your finger or better, a piece of cloth, into it, and rub it upon those parts of your outline as (in the figure which it represents) do not receive the direct light of the window, and where it appears lightest touch your copy with your chalk, leaving the clean surface of the paper as a middle tint.

9th. For the coarse paper on which you have hitherto practiced you may now substitute drawing paper. This, instead of being fixed at its corners, must be fastened around its entire edge.



Exchange your charcoal for a swan quill, hair-pencil and Indian ink. You may, however, sketch your subject lightly with charcoal, as it is more easily erased; when you have it quite correct go over the lines with your black lead pencil. Rub down plenty of Indian ink, for much of the freedom of your work will depend on the wholesale way in which your shades are washed in—dilute to proper depth for lightest shades, and brush in with your camel's hair pencil. Let this first shading dry, then give another coating where the shades appear deeper, and darken the mixture for the deepest touches.

Continue this practice for six months before attempting smaller subjects. You will now find little difficulty in copying the best examples of either ancient or modern ornament that can be laid before you; but flowers are your best subjects, as you will now (from your practice on large subjects) have obtained sufficient freedom to prevent you from getting too finical and minute.

\* D. R. Hay, Edinburgh, who decorated Abbotsford, in "Painting."